

UNCLASSIFIED

RECORD

**STATEMENT BY
MAJOR THOMAS C. FRILOUX
LOUISIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

BEFORE THE
COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES**

**September 20, 2006
San Diego, California**

UNCLASSIFIED

Overview

General Punaro and other distinguished members of this commission, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear today before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves as a representative of the Army National Guard. The Global War on Terror, along with catastrophic natural disasters within the last year, have transformed the Army National Guard from a strategic reserve for the Cold War to an operational reserve that regularly deploys to support both its Federal and State missions. The Army National Guard of today is the most experienced in combat operations and homeland defense since the Second World War.

The 3rd Battalion 156th Infantry Regiment of the 256th Infantry Brigade, LAARNG, returned in September 2005 from an 18-month mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III which included a one-year deployment to Baghdad, Iraq. The battalion was task organized in Iraq into Task Force 3-156 Infantry with this mission to conduct full-spectrum operations within the Multi-National Force Division-Baghdad Area of Responsibility to include combat operations, humanitarian assistance, and Stability and Support Operations. The Task Force conducted combined and joint operations with Active Army and National Guard combat units, Joint Special Operations, Active and Reserve Component Marine Corps, the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Police, and other Iraqi security forces.

Upon our redeployment from Iraq back to Louisiana, some members of the battalion were thrust into another fight...Military Support to Civilian Authorities in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. The battalion was again task organized into a Task Force to provide security assistance to local law enforcement and humanitarian assistance for three Louisiana Parishes affected by Hurricane Rita.

I had the privilege to serve as the Operations Officer of the 3rd Battalion 156th Infantry Regiment during pre-mobilization, post-mobilization, deployment, redeployment, and post-deployment operations. This experience allows me to provide you with details on the issues that prevent reserve competent units from being fully trained prior to mobilization, the effectiveness of the current 39-day training model for reserve component units prior to mobilization, issues during pre-mobilization and post-mobilization regarding training and equipping, and recommendations to avoid previous issues during future mobilizations.

Pre-Mobilization Readiness

The current 39-Day Training Model used by reserve component forces does not allow maneuver combat units in the Army National Guard to be fully trained for combat prior to mobilization. But the model does allow National Guard combat formations to meet established expectations prior to mobilization. These expectations include proficiency in combat maneuver units at the platoon level,

proficiency in combat service support units at the company level, and fully proficient battle staffs at the brigade and battalion levels.

Increasing the expectation of reserve component units prior to mobilization will require additional resources in funding and training. In 2004 prior to mobilization, the full-time unit support personnel in my battalion were funded at only 25 personnel, 60% of a required 42 full-time personnel. Today after mobilization for OIF III, transformation of the unit, and a foreseeable future of deployments for both our Federal and State missions, we have witnessed a decrease in our full-time manning support. We are now funded at 55%, or 26 out of a required 48 personnel. My experience has taught me that full-time manning directly correlates to unit readiness. The Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model provides additional assistance in decreasing the necessary training time from mobilization to deployment. The ARFORGEN model for the Army National Guard allows five focused training years from reset following a deployment to future mobilization. Additional training funds are necessary with the model to increase yearly training days as the unit gets closer to mobilization.

39-Day Training Model

The current 39-day training model for reserve component units is a dinosaur of the strategic reserve force. As I stated, the model does allow units to meet established expectations prior to mobilization, but these expectations are for a strategic reserve force and far below what is necessary for the minimal post-mobilization train-up of an operational reserve. The 39-day training model allows for 15 days of Active Duty for Training (ADT) and 14 days of Inactive Duty Training (IDT) divided into monthly drill periods. The current model allows units to meet yearly individual soldier training requirements and limited leader and collective tasks training. Increases in the number of funded ADT days and IDT days will increase the mobilization expectation of a unit. An increase of ADT days from 15 days to 21 days would allow combat maneuver units to increase their collective task training and gain proficiency at the company level as opposed to a platoon level. Increases in the number of authorized IDT or drill days allows for focused leader training to support the collective task training.

The ARFORGEN model takes these considerations into account. In the model, training years immediately following redeployment use the 39-day training model and focus on unit reset and individual soldier proficiency. As the unit gets closer to the mobilization year, increases in IDT days and ADT periods are authorized to support additional leader and collective tasks training. These additional days must be funded in order for the ARFORGEN model to work and allow a minimal post-mobilization train-up.

Pre-Mobilization and Post-Mobilization Training and Equipping

Bottom line up front, Task Force 3-156 Infantry was fully trained and equipped for full spectrum operations when it assumed responsibility of its area of operations

north of Baghdad, Iraq in mid-November 2004. The process to get there from mobilization in May 2004 to deployment in October 2004 was both long and inefficient in the pre-mobilization and post-mobilization phases.

During pre-mobilization, the decision to mobilize the battalion as a wheeled infantry unit without an official Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) and not as mechanized infantry unit as organized with an approved Modified TO&E (MTO&E) caused the unit to spend much of its valuable pre-mobilization time creating an organization and then reorganizing available personnel and equipment into it. Additionally, almost three months after the March 2004 alert and less than a week prior to mobilization in May 2004, the battalion MTO&E was changed again when it was tasked to mobilize one company as mechanized infantry. Equipment shortages were also an issue during pre-mobilization. Many critical pieces of equipment such as crew-served weapon systems and night vision devices were laterally transferred to other mobilizing LAARNG units and other mobilizing Army National Guard units across the country. All M240B machine guns in the battalion were laterally transferred to the 39th Brigade, ARARNG, in February 2004 for their deployment to OIF II, one month prior to the alert of the my unit for mobilization. The loss of these critical pieces of equipment during the pre-mobilization phase would haunt the unit throughout post-mobilization training.

Training during the unit's post-mobilization at Fort Hood, TX and Fort Irwin, CA was effective in its endstate of producing a fully combat-ready unit, but long and inefficient in method. Training was conducted on tasks already trained and documented during the training year such as individual weapon qualification and Common Task Training. Collective task training did not accurately reflect the tasks to be conducted in Iraq. Too much emphasis was placed on collective tasks for CSS units such as convoy operations and convoy live fire exercises and not enough emphasis was placed on maneuver unit collective tasks such as steady state operations, cordon and search operations, humanitarian assistance, and cultural awareness. The tactics, techniques, and procedures for force protection such as counter-IED operations and presence patrols taught at the mobilization station were not the same tactics, techniques, and procedures used daily in the combat theater. An informational link between the power projection platform and the combat units in theater was not evident.

New equipment training and replacement equipment training was not front-loaded in post-mobilization training and was a training distracter during valuable collective task training time. The battalion had to schedule weapon ranges throughout the post-mobilization train-up to qualify soldiers and crews on newly issued weapons such as M240B machine guns, M107 sniper rifles, and M500 shotguns. Equipment shortages during training were most significant during the Mission Rehearsal Exercise at Fort Irwin, CA. A significant portion of the unit's equipment was shipped to Kuwait just prior to the exercise at Fort Irwin. The unit conducted Task Force level operations with one company's amount of vehicles.

Subordinate companies were constantly cross-leveling vehicles throughout the exercise to accomplish assigned tasks. Battalion-level steady state operations were not possible to rehearse.

Recommendations for Future Mobilizations

Issues faced during pre-mobilization and post-mobilization training can be addressed with the following recommendations. First, fully adopt the ARFORGEN Model as currently designed. This model will increase training, funding, and assets to units approaching a mobilization window and will produce a unit at a higher level of combat proficiency once mobilized. Second, mobilize a unit as currently organized with its approved T&OE. The transformation of the entire U.S. Army into a modular force is ongoing and will assist in avoiding the creation of organizations just prior to mobilization. Third, the validation authority at the power projection platform needs to accept and validate training conducted prior to mobilization by the mobilized unit. The ARFORGEN model will enable units to reach higher levels of combat proficiency during pre-mobilization. Training during Post-mobilization should not start at lower levels of training. And last, a direct link between the power projection platform and the theater combat commanders must exist before and during post-mobilization training. The tactics, techniques, and procedures are very fluid in theater and lessons learned by units in combat must be immediately forwarded to inbound units to allow for an adjustment to training, as necessary.

Conclusion

The 3rd Battalion 156th Infantry Regiment mobilized, conducted post-mobilization training, deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, and conducted full-spectrum operations during OIF III in order to assist in the establishment of a democratic Iraq. The unit was fully trained to conduct its assigned mission and successful in all assigned tasks. The road to war was long, painful, but effective.

Thank you for allowing me to be here today. It is my honor and privilege to offer my training experience and insight to this Commission as it considers changes to the training approach and future roles of the Army National Guard. It is my pleasure to answer your questions regarding these issues.